"Church and Christian Missionaries: Uncovering Their Role in Violence and Cultural Pollution in Buddhist Countries"

Introduction:

This comprehensive essay embarks on an in-depth exploration of the historical and contemporary roles played by the Church and Christian missionaries in perpetuating violence and cultural disruption within predominantly Buddhist countries. Building upon the previously discussed facets, we will delve even deeper into the intricate historical precedents, ongoing controversies, and substantiated case studies from countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, and additional regions to provide a profound understanding of the complex dynamics between religious conversion, violence, and the erosion of cultural identities. Moreover, we will explore the diverse strategies to address these unethical conversion practices and conclude by emphasizing the pivotal importance of preserving Buddhist culture.

1. **A Brief History and Present of Church and Christian Missionaries:**

The history and contemporary presence of the Church and Christian missionaries in relation to violence and their activities in developing countries, particularly involving the use of financial incentives for religious conversion, present a complex and multifaceted narrative. Critics have often pointed to historical instances where violence was employed to propagate Christianity, exemplified by events like the Crusades, leaving a lasting impact on perceptions of the faith.

Moreover, well-documented scandals involving corruption, immorality, and child abuse have significantly tarnished the Church's reputation, leading to calls for greater transparency and accountability. The intertwined issues of conversion, violence, and Christianity throughout history have sparked controversy and conflict, notably during the colonial era when European powers used force to spread Christianity among indigenous populations. While some recent conversions have been non-coercive, debates persist within the religion about the ethics and methods of converting others, including concerns about manipulative tactics and cultural imperialism.

Certain Christian denominations have also grappled with major scandals and controversies, from widespread sexual abuse in the **Catholic Church** to financial improprieties among evangelical leaders. In parallel, a notable global shift of Christianity has occurred, with declining numbers in the West and a rising Christian presence in the Global South, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, referred to as the "global southward shift." This shift has spurred an increase in Christian missionary activities in developing countries, where poverty, political instability, and social inequality render many vulnerable to external influences. Some missionaries utilize financial incentives, such as education, healthcare, and material goods, to attract conversions, but this approach raises ethical concerns regarding exploitation and power

imbalances. Additionally, it raises broader questions about the role of religion in development, potentially undermining sustainable and equitable development efforts.

In conclusion, the evolving landscape of Church history, missionary work, and their intersection with violence and financial incentives necessitates a nuanced approach that prioritizes ethical and respectful engagement with the diverse cultures and communities in developing countries while respecting their agency and dignity.

2. **Unethical Practices of Churches and Christian Missionaries to Convert Buddhists:**

Unethical practices employed by certain Churches and Christian missionaries to convert Buddhists into Christianity in parts of Asia are a concerning issue that compromises the integrity of religious conversions. These practices include the use of material and economic incentives, where vulnerable Buddhists are enticed with financial aid, education opportunities, and medical assistance, often targeting marginalized communities facing economic hardships. This creates a coercive environment, pressuring individuals to convert not out of genuine faith but as a means of survival.

Deceptive practices have also been reported, involving the misrepresentation of Christianity as an extension of Buddhist beliefs or the intentional misinterpretation of religious texts to manipulate individuals. This blurring of theological lines exploits people's trust in spiritual guidance and confuses their religious convictions.

Furthermore, in regions marked by historical tensions or conflicts between different religious or ethnic groups, certain conversion organizations may exploit these divides to create a sense of belonging among newly converted Christians. This not only compromises the authenticity of conversions but can also exacerbate social fragmentation and animosity within communities. In essence, the unethical tactics used for Buddhist-to-Christian conversions raise significant ethical and moral concerns about the nature of religious outreach and conversion practices in these areas.

3. Christian Churches, Missionaries, Violence, and Cultural Pollution in Thailand

The issue of Christian Churches, missionaries, violence, and cultural influence in Thailand is a complex and contentious one, with multiple perspectives and allegations. It is suggested that in areas where Christian organizations cannot gain control over the government, they resort to violence as a means of furthering their religious influence. However, when they do manage to secure influential positions within the government, the alleged tactics shift towards misleading the masses and cultural pollution, with behaviours like **alcoholism culture, drug culture, and prostitution culture being promoted**.

One specific example provided focuses on Thailand, where Christian churches (Catholics) have gained some control over the government and international Buddhist monasteries in various major urban centres. According to this viewpoint, Christian missionaries infiltrate these monasteries by becoming monks and eventually rise to become the chiefs of these monasteries. Allegedly, once in positions of authority, **they blend elements of Buddhism and Christianity, gradually introducing Christianity to the public within and around the monastery premises. This has purportedly led to a rapid increase in the number of Catholics churches in these areas, with Catholic churches implicated unethically in the spread of Christianity**. The narrative also suggests that these churches are not only promoting their religion but also spreading superstitions and fostering blind faith, leading the youth away from the path of enlightenment.

Furthermore, the narrative highlights the emergence of cultural phenomena like the Full Moon Party in Thailand, where youths engage in excessive drinking, all-night dancing, and promiscuous sexual activities, including prostitution. (In Buddhist Culture Full Moon is auspicious day for observing eight precepts and meditation practices). The assertion is that Thailand's Buddhist culture has already been significantly polluted and eroded due to these influences. Additionally, Christianity declining in Western countries, it is spreading in developing countries, particularly in predominantly Buddhist nations, through what is described as nefarious means, including violence, immoral funding, and the targeting of vulnerable youths.

The situation in Thailand, like in many other places, is complex, with various factors, religious tensions, and geopolitical interests at play. While there have been reports of unethical practices by some Christian missionaries (Catholics), it is not accurate to generalize these actions to all Christian missionaries working in the country. Additionally, there are concerns about the interfaith relations in Thailand and the need for respectful dialogue and understanding between different religious communities to promote religious freedom and harmony.

4. Christian Churches, Missionaries and Violence in Sri Lanka

The relationship between Christian Churches, missionaries, and violence in Sri Lanka is a complex and contentious topic.

Anagarika Dharmapala, a prominent figure in the Sri Lankan Buddhist revivalist movement, expressed concerns about the perceived negative impact of Christianity on Sri Lankan society, attributing it to the promotion of vices like alcoholism and prostitution.

The narrative goes on to assert that the **Church** played a significant role in the inception, support, fully funding (international church fund) of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an organization known for separatist and terrorist activities. This alleged involvement extended beyond mere ideological support to include financial backing for acts of violence directed at the Sri Lankan government, particularly affecting the Sinhalese Buddhists and for some Tamil Hindus. Over four decades, the LTTE's aggressive tactics reportedly

resulted in the loss of millions of lives, involving acts such as assassinations of government officials, attacks on revered Buddhist monks, and a devastating bombing at the sacred Buddha's Tooth Relic Temple in Kandy in 1998, which was done by the LTTE under the influence of the Church.

The LTTE's activities even extended beyond Sri Lanka, with the group implicated in the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, often involving female suicide bombers trained within Sri Lanka under the LTTE's auspices. Notably, the narrative suggests a connection between the Church and these violent activities through the involvement of a female Australian Christian missionary, who reportedly married a prominent LTTE leader and played a key role in training individuals, including children and females, for suicide bombings targeting government officials in Sri Lanka. **The Church not only provided financial support but also allegedly fostered a culture of violence under the guise of advocating for a separate Tamil state, potentially with a hidden agenda of expanding Christianity in Sri Lanka and neighbouring countries.**

5. Christian Churches, Missionaries and Violence in Myanmar

The perspective regarding churches and Christian missionaries in Myanmar draws parallels with the tactics employed by the LTTE in Sri Lanka. It suggests that these entities may be adopting a similar approach in Myanmar, which raises significant concerns. The LTTE was a separatist and terrorist organization that allegedly received support from various sources. The claim that churches and Christian missionaries in Myanmar are providing funding and full support to separatist and potentially terrorist groups implies financial assistance and, possibly, the provision of weaponry, which could have serious implications for regional stability and security.

The activities of various armed groups in Myanmar, such as the Chin National Army (CNA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) are operating in a manner similar to the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in Sri Lanka and alleges that they are fully funded and supported by **Catholic Churches** and Christian missionaries. This information highlights several similarities between these Myanmar-based groups and the LTTE.

These are the act of **"SILENT TERRORISM"**, these entities are allegedly engaged in conversion activities that support violence and conflict while concealing their direct involvement. This characterization underscores the perceived secrecy and insidious nature of their actions. Additionally, historical context is provided, referencing a case study on the history of violence involving Christian missionaries and churches.

In some cases, churches and Christian missionaries may be viewed as more dangerous than Muslim terrorism. Terrorism and violence are complex issues influenced by various factors. Furthermore, the situation in Myanmar is characterized by complex religious and

political dynamics. External support for armed groups by Church and Christian missionaries in Myanmar adds an additional layer of complexity to the already intricate situation.

To sum up, the engagement of churches and Christian missionaries in endorsing, financing, and promoting violence and separatism in Myanmar poses a significant threat to the well-being of the country's inhabitants. The younger generation of Christians is particularly susceptible to the extreme and harmful practices employed by certain church factions. It is evident that the Church and Christian missionaries are employing questionable tactics, akin to silent terrorism, under the pretext of advocating for democracy in Myanmar. These actions raise serious concerns about the potential destabilization of the region and the exploitation of impressionable individuals within Christian communities.

6. Way to Stop Violent Church and Christian Missionaries

Addressing unethical conversion practices by Christian missionaries in Buddhist-majority countries requires a multifaceted approach involving various stakeholders. These practices are alleged to have negative consequences, raising concerns in these nations. Strategies to counteract these practices include raising awareness and educating the public about their detrimental impact, advocating for policy reforms that can regulate missionary activities, promoting dialogue and collaboration between Christian missionaries and local communities to foster mutual understanding and respect, monitoring and reporting instances of unethical practices to ensure transparency and accountability, and taking legal action when necessary to uphold local laws and regulations. The coordinated effort among government bodies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and the public is essential to facilitate ethical and respectful missionary work that respects the religious beliefs and cultural practices of the local communities.

It is also important to acknowledge concerns about potential threats to Buddhism and its culture, emphasizing the moral principles, loving-kindness, and compassion that are central to Buddhism, while engaging in constructive interfaith dialogue and discussions to promote religious harmony in these countries.

7. Awareness for Buddhist Youth

Buddhist youth should be aware of the historical context and present-day concerns regarding the involvement of Christian churches and missionaries in Buddhist-majority countries. Throughout history, there have been instances where violence was used to spread Christianity, including events like the Crusades. Recent controversies and scandals, such as corruption, immoral actions, and child abuse within the Church, have also raised concerns. Additionally, the global shift of Christianity from the West to East has led to an increase in missionary activities in developing countries, often involving the use of financial incentives, evil tactics, unethical conversion, superstitions to encourage religious conversion.

In some cases, Christian missionaries use money to attract people to convert to Christianity, offering financial assistance for education, health care, or basic needs. While this may alleviate immediate needs, it raises ethical concerns about exploitation and power imbalances. The use of money in missionary work can also disrupt efforts for sustainable and equitable development. In some instances, Christian missionaries have been accused of using deceptive tactics, disrespecting local customs, and targeting vulnerable groups, including children and young people.

It's essential to recognize that while these issues are concerning, they don't apply to all Christian missionaries. Nevertheless, there are reports of unethical practices, and these should be addressed. Strategies to counter these practices involve raising awareness, advocating for policy reforms, promoting dialogue between missionaries and local communities, monitoring and reporting unethical practices, and, when necessary, taking legal action. A coordinated effort involving various stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and the public, is vital to ensure ethical and respectful missionary work that respects the agency and dignity of people in these countries.

Ultimately, awareness and informed discussions can empower Buddhist youth to critically evaluate these complex issues and contribute to knowing the truth.

Conclusion

The involvement of the Church and Christian missionaries in predominantly Buddhist countries is a complex issue marked by historical instances of violence and coercion in the spread of Christianity, contemporary concerns about unethical conversion practices and financial incentives, and links to violence and separatist movements. To address these challenges, a multifaceted approach is necessary, involving awareness-raising, policy reforms, dialogue, monitoring, and legal action, with the goal of upholding religious freedom and diversity while countering unethical practices. It is also crucial to educate Buddhist youth about these issues.

In the midst of intricate religious and cultural dynamics, fostering understanding, tolerance, and respect among religious communities remains paramount for building a harmonious society that values diversity and upholds the principles of peace and compassion while preserving cultural identities.